



TWIN CITY TIMES

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Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1999

Thursday, January 2, 2025 • FREE

Humane Society announces “Cold Paws, Warm Heart” raffle winners

LEWISTON, ME -- The Greater Androscoggin Humane Society announces the winners of their “Cold Paws, Warm Heart” Annual Raffle. With over \$12,500 in ticket sales the winners

were: Sandra Martel of Turner winning \$500 of home heating assistance and a handmade quilt, Joe Valecko of Lewiston with \$300 of home heating assistance, Barbara Provencher of Falmouth

with \$200 of home heating assistance and Mary Brown of Rumford with \$100 of home heating assistance. All proceeds from the raffle directly benefit the Humane Society.

The Greater Androscoggin Humane Society provides a safe haven for over 3,000 sick, homeless and abused animals in the greater Androscoggin area per year. The primary support for the shelter comes

from fundraising events and donations of concerned citizens.

The Greater Androscoggin Humane Society is located at 55 Strawberry Avenue in Lewiston. If you are interested

in learning more about volunteering at the Shelter or adopting an animal call 783-2311 or visit the website at www.SavingPetsInMaine.org. You can also join them on www.facebook.com/GAHumane.

CareerCenter resume workshop offered in Lewiston

CareerCenter Resume Workshop



Tuesday, January 14th
11am- 1pm
Second Floor Idea Lab

No Registration Required

Lewiston PUBLIC LIBRARY

CareerCenter

LEWISTON, ME -- In partnership with the Lewiston CareerCenter, the Lewiston Public Library will host a resume workshop on Tuesday, January 14th in the Idea Lab on the second floor from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The CareerCenter will provide professional resume writing and job connection assistance on a first-come, first-served

basis. No registration is required.

The CareerCenter provides a variety of employment and training services at no charge, whether you're looking for your first job, trying to find another job, or striving for a better job. They look at each step of your career-decision process and make recommendations as to which CareerCenter resources might be most

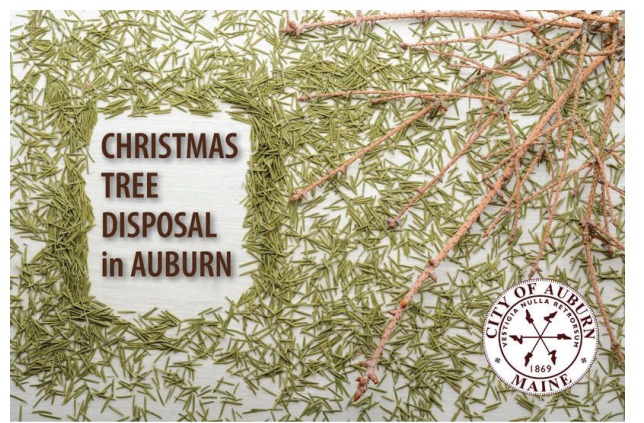
helpful. For more information, please visit <https://www.mainecareercenter.gov/locations/lewiston.shtml>

The Lewiston Public Library is located downtown at 200 Lisbon Street at the corner of Pine Street. More information on this program is available by contacting the Lewiston Public Library at 513-3135 or LPLReference@lewistonmaine.gov.

Christmas tree drop off sites with City of Auburn

AUBURN, ME -- Why are Christmas trees bad at sewing? They keep dropping their needles! Speaking of which...when you're ready to get rid of your live (dead?) Christmas tree, there are 4 locations to choose from. Auburn residents can drop trees (at no charge) at:

- * Auburn Public Works on Gracelawn Road - place trees near the resident sand shed
- * Maine Waste-to-Energy on Goldthwaite Road
- * Oldcastle/Jolly Gardner at 481 Spring Road, Poland or
- * Engine 2 Fire Station, 181 South Main Street



in New Auburn

IMPORTANT: PLEASE DO NOT place your trees curbside! They will not be collected. Be sure there are no decorations on

your tree, and do not leave wreaths (they are made using wire).

TREES MUST BE DROPPED BEFORE JANUARY 31!

Lewiston: It's time to renew your dog's license

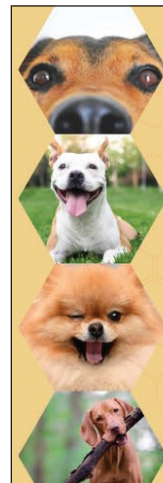
IS YOUR DOG LICENSED?

It's the law for dogs
6 months or older

License fees account for 95% of the state's Animal Welfare fund

To get a license, visit the City Clerk's office or apply on the Clerk's website by January 31

LEWISTON ME



LEWISTON, ME -- Attention, Lewiston dog owners! Ensure your furry friend is licensed and compliant with Maine state law. Licensing is required for all dogs aged 6 months and older.

Here's what you need to know:

Fees: \$6 for neutered/spayed dogs; \$11 for dogs that are not neutered/spayed. Supports Maine's Animal Welfare Program - roughly 95% of the program's funding comes from licensing fees!

Prevents spread of rabies

Deadline is January 31

Get licensed by visiting the City Clerk's office, or by applying online at www.lewistonmaine.gov/123/Dog-Licenses

Let's work together to keep our pets safe and support animal welfare!

My Little Snowflake Handprint Keepsake

Friday
January 10th

10AM

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ages birth - 6 years old
and their caregivers

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What do you think?

We strongly encourage Letters to the Editor, Op/Eds, columns or any other submissions from our readers.

Agree with us or another columnist? Disagree? Write to us and let us know!

Email all submissions, including name, address and phone number, to the editor.

Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Additional donation received to support Riding to the Top

WINDHAM, ME -- Bob Dunfey, the Volunteer Race Director for The Maine Marathon, Half Marathon and Relay, announced last week that Riding To The Top (RTT) will be receiving an additional donation, \$9,500 on top of the \$10,500 announced previously this year as a 2024 beneficiary. The 2024 Maine Marathon was held on Sunday, October 6.

“Christmas came early this year! We were so honored to be named a beneficiary of this year’s Maine Marathon,” says

Sarah Bronson, Executive Director, “and then to receive news this month that the donation amount was increased has been an unexpected and overwhelming gift. We are so grateful to Gorham Savings Bank and to the many volunteers who work tirelessly to make the marathon possible. As an organization that operates with a small paid staff and a large volunteer corps, we are in awe of the all-volunteer effort of the Maine Marathon. Funds from the Maine Marathon will help the clients, horses and pro-



GSB President and CEO Steve deCastro with Andrea Connor of the Maine Marathon and Riding To The Top Development Director, Kelly Johnson

grams of RTT as we look forward to the start of the new year!”

Riding To The Top (RTT), www.ridingtothetop.org, is a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing the health and well-being of children and adults with disabilities through equine-assisted services, including therapeutic riding, therapeutic carriage driving, equine-assisted learning, and hippotherapy. The RTT team includes certified instructors, specially trained volunteers, and a herd of exceptional horses.

Clients range in age from three to ninety plus and are referred by doctors, therapists, social workers, teachers, family members, and friends.

The Maine Marathon, www.MaineMarathon.com, organized by the Maine Track Club is a volunteer driven, nonprofit event with proceeds going to local Maine charities. Since 1997, have raised almost \$8 million to charity. Over 50 volunteer race coordinators plan the event during the year and about 900 volunteers deliver the event on race weekend.

New Paid Family and Medical Leave portal launches

AUGUSTA, ME – The Maine Department of Labor announced today that the new Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) Portal, the on-line system for employers to register their business information, designate a payroll processor, file quarterly wage reports, and remit quarterly premium contributions, will be launching on January 6.

Starting January 1st, 2025, any employer with at least one Maine-based employee must begin payroll withholdings for their employees. Employers with 15 or more employees will contribute 1 percent of wages and may deduct up to half of the contribution from the employees’ wages. Employers with less than 15 employees will contribute 0.5 percent of wages and may deduct the entire amount from the employ-

MAINE DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

ees’ wages.

All employers must register on the portal to begin wage reporting in April 2025. The portal will also allow self-employed individuals and tribal governments to elect coverage.

Employers will begin their first quarterly wage reporting and premium payments starting April 1, 2025, and they are due by April 30, 2025.

Stay up to date by signing up for the PFML Get Notified List and

learn more in our FAQ, employer resources, recorded demonstrations, and step by step guides on our website: www.maine.gov/paidleave/

The Department partnered with FAST Enterprises to build the Maine Paid Family and Medical Leave Program’s online contributions portal. FAST Enterprises has previously worked with Maine Revenue Services to create the Maine Tax Portal, as well as the contribution collections system for the Massachusetts Department of Family and Medical Leave.

Benefits are scheduled to begin May 1, 2026.

4-H launching workshops on climate action, farm animal care



Photos courtesy University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

MAINE -- University of Maine Cooperative Extension 4-H Virtual Learning is kicking off 2025 with two opportunities in January, a series on climate civic action and a series introducing farm care and basic animal science. This Extension program leads virtual learning opportunities for young people on a variety of topics throughout the year. The zoom sessions feature activities that are hands-on, minds-on

learning for youth located anywhere in the state.

Farm Animal Care FUNDamentals will be held on Wednesdays, January 22, 29 and February 5 from 4 - 5:15 p.m. Participants ages 9-18 will learn the basics of farm animal care, exploring basic animal husbandry, care and nutrition. Registration deadline is January 7, 2025.

Climate Civic Action club will take place on Mondays, January 27, Feb-

ruary 3 and 10 from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. Participants ages 12-18 will learn about climate change from global and local perspectives and explore opportunities for individual action to make a difference. Registration deadline is January 13, 2025.

Participation is free though donations are accepted. Learn more or register by visiting the event webpage. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact 207.581.8206; sarah.sparks@maine.edu.

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

APL offers programs leading up to 2025 Camden Conference

AUBURN, ME -- The Camden Conference was founded in 1987 as a nonprofit, non-partisan educational organization whose mission is to foster informed discourse on world issues. Each year, they host a conference, with participating libraries offering community events related to their theme. The 38th annual Camden Conference, scheduled for February 21-23, 2025, is entitled "Democracy Under Threat: A Global Perspective." It will be both a live and virtual event. In person, it will be hosted in Maine at the Camden Opera House; live-streamed to the Strand Theatre in Rockland and the Lunt Auditorium in Falmouth; and available virtually to homes and classrooms worldwide.

This year's topic focuses on democracies worldwide, which are under intense pressure from populist and nationalist movements. These movements threaten individual freedoms and strain international relations. The Conference will look at the challenges to democracies around the world and explore solutions to strengthen democratic systems.

The Auburn Public Library is pleased to par-

ticipate as one of the hosting libraries. Leading up to this year's Conference, APL has three events planned.

FILM SCREENING & DISCUSSION --

BEYOND ELECTIONS: REDEFINING DEMOCRACY IN THE AMERICAS

Thursday, January 16, 2025 -- 3:00-5:00 p.m.

Androscoggin Community Room

On Thursday, January 16, the Auburn Public Library invites you to a screening and discussion of the documentary *Beyond Elections: Redefining Democracy in the Americas*.

This film takes a deep look at democracy. According to film director Michael Fox:

"... Following decades of US-backed dictatorships, civil wars, and devastating structural adjustment policies in the South, and corporate control, electoral corruption, and fraud in the North, representative politics in the Americas is in crisis. Citizens are now choosing to redefine democracy under their own terms: local, direct, and participatory."

"Beyond Elections is a journey that takes us across the Americas to attempt to answer one of

the most important questions of our time: What is Democracy?"

Following the screening, attendees are invited to remain for a brief discussion of the film.

This program will take place in the Androscoggin Community Room starting at 3:00 p.m.

ELECTIONS, POPULISM, AND DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING IN THE AMERICAS

Dr. Clarisa Pérez-Armendáriz, Associate Professor of Politics and Chair of the Latin American and Latinx Studies Program, Bates College

Monday, January 27, 2025 -- 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Androscoggin Community Room

On Monday, January 27, 2025, the Auburn Public Library will welcome Dr. Clarisa Pérez-Armendáriz, Associate Professor of Politics and Chair of the Latin American and Latinx Studies Program at Bates College. Dr. Pérez-Armendáriz will be at the Library to talk about *Elections, Populism, and Democratic Backsliding in the Americas*.

Democratic backsliding is the process of political change in which

countries that enjoy a certain level of democracy become significantly less democratic. Countries across the Americas--a continent of which the United States is part--have experienced significant democratic backsliding over the 21st century. What explains this recent wave of democratic erosion? More specifically why has democratic backsliding occurred under the leadership of freely elected governments? Drawing on the experiences of Mexico and countries in Central and Latin America, Professor Pérez-Armendáriz highlights two pathways for democratic backsliding and suggests some opportunities and strategies for protecting this form of government.

Clarisa Pérez-Armendáriz is an Associate Professor of Politics and Chair of the Latin American and Latinx Studies Program at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. Her research explores how international migrants influence politics in their countries of origin, particularly in the context of crime and violence. Her publications appear in *Comparative Political Studies*, *Studies in*

Comparative International Development, and *the Journal of Ethnic and*

Migration Studies, and *Comparative Migration Studies*. At Bates College, she teaches *Comparative Politics*, *Political Violence in Latin America*, *Latinx Politics*, and *Latin American Politics*. Professor Pérez-Armendáriz completed her Ph.D. in Government at the University of Texas at Austin. She also has a Master's degree in Public Policy from Harvard's Kennedy School of Government with an emphasis on International Security and a B.A. in International Relations from Pomona College. She served as a US Foreign Service officer in Mexico City and India from 1998-2002. She and her two daughters have been Auburn residents for nearly 15 years.

This program will take place in the Androscoggin Community Room beginning at 4:30 p.m.

BOOK DISCUSSION --

DEMOCRACY AWAKENING: NOTES ON THE STATE OF AMERICA

by Heather Cox Richardson

Thursday, February 13, 2025 -- 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Conference Room

The final event leading up to the 38th Annual Camden Conference will

be a discussion of the book *Democracy Awakening: Notes on the State of America* by Heather Cox Richardson.

A historian and author who was raised in Maine, Heather Cox Richardson is also the author of the popular daily newsletter, *Letters from an American*. In this book, she explains how America, once a beacon of democracy, now teeters on the brink of autocracy -- and how we can turn back. (from book jacket)

This discussion will take place in person in the Conference Room on Thursday, February 13, 2025, from 4:00-5:00 p.m. Thanks to funding provided by the Camden Conference, free copies of the book are available to those who register, and books will be available for pickup on or after January 6.

To register for any of these events, please visit the Library website -- www.auburnpubliclibrary.org -- or call the Reference Desk at 207-333-6640, ext. 4.

For more details on the 2025 Camden Conference, including participating speakers, membership, or other pre-conference events, visit their website at camdenconference.org.

Skelton Taintor & Abbott welcomes litigation attorney

LEWISTON, ME -- Skelton Taintor & Abbott is pleased to welcome attorney Christian A. Jones to the firm as an Associate Attorney. Christian is joining the firm's family law group. Christian graduated from Franklin and Marshall College and earned a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Maine School of Law. Christian's background includes work as a student attorney at the Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic's General Practice Clinic and Rural Practice Clinic, and at the Office of the

Maine Attorney General.

Firm President, Sarah Mitchell, stated, "We are thrilled to welcome Christian to our team. Christian's dedication to excellence aligns perfectly with our firm's values. We are confident that he will be a tremendous asset to our clients and will contribute significantly to our continued success."

Skelton Taintor & Abbott is a full-service trial and general practice law firm representing clients throughout Maine. With the addition of Attorney Jones, the firm

consists of 13 attorneys practicing in virtually all fields of law and in both federal and state courts.

Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.

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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

Challenging Boundary Bald Mountain



Hikers emerge onto snow packed ledges with stupendous views

My son, Adam, and I have been considering a climb of Boundary Bald Mountain for several years. The 3,638-foot peak is located in a rugged remote wilderness region northeast of Jackman near the Canadian border.

Access to the spectacular summit that offers 360-degree views is via Bald Mountain Road. The rough dirt road is usually unplowed in winter so a sense of urgency was needed if we were going to complete the climb this fall. We began watching the weather for a quality forecast and selected a sunny November day for our attempt.

My wife, Nancy, and I met Adam and his friend,

Liz, in Jackman on a cold almost cloudless morning. We drove about eight miles north on Route 201 to a right turn on Bald Mountain Road and motored another four miles to a right turn onto the trailhead access road. High clearance vehicles were an asset on the steep rutted climb to a small turn-off on the right that provided space for three vehicles. The road is gated immediately beyond the parking area.

An online trail description indicated the trek tended to be wet in many areas, so we opted to wear over-the-ankle hiking boots even though the region had suffered through several weeks of drought. Although the trail was es-



Heavy snow on spruce branches diminished visibility and slowed progress

entially dry, tall boots were a good choice when we encountered several inches of snow at higher elevations.

While we were organizing our packs and changing into boots, another hiker arrived and claimed the third parking space. He was the only other person we met during the trek.

We walked around the gate and began hiking steadily uphill on the eroded remnants of a former logging road enjoying periodic views of the snow covered summit ridge. The other hiker passed us moving at a fast pace. Following a long mile, we turned left onto a well-marked trail.

Initially, we ascended on a moderate gradient in a predominantly conifer forest. However, the path soon steepened and a dusting of snow increased to a few inches.

As we proceeded higher, boulder-strewn terrain in a dense forest required some scrambling. Heavy snow had accumulated on spruce branches which diminished visibility and slowed progress.

While negotiating through a particularly precipitous, sometimes icy section, we met the other hiker who was descending. He reported reaching the summit ridge, but had turned back due to difficulty finding the trail in thick mountain scrub with moderate snow accumulation.

Soon after, we emerged onto snow packed ledges with fabulous views. As the hiker advised, finding the trail in seemingly impenetrable alpine scrub caked with snow was challenging. We waded through dense vegetation towards a rocky prominence and after persistent effort arrived at the massive rounded boulder with its stupendous 360-degree views.

From that windy vantage point, we could see the remainder of the wintry ridge. A helipad and radio tower on the far northern



A hiker arrives at Boundary Bald highpoint

end were enveloped in rime ice and had a surreal other worldly appearance. A large number of crows circling the helipad attracted our attention. We speculated they might be feeding on a dead animal.

The radio tower appeared to be situated on higher ground so we negotiated through a narrow corridor of stunted evergreens towards the presumed summit. The scavengers flew off when we arrived at the helipad. Replete with a multitude of bird tracks in the snow, the flat square steel structure offered the most extensive views of the day. No explanation for the odd behavior of the crows was detected. We completed our exploration of the ridge by scaling another huge boulder to the apparent highpoint adjacent to the radio tower.

During our trek back over the lengthy escarpment, we stopped for a lunch break on a precipice protected from the wind. The south facing cliff offered wondrous views of the mountains of northwestern Maine.

The treacherous snow and ice covered surface in the higher elevations required a careful time-consuming descent. In a few potentially hazardous areas, finding and using hand holds was necessary

to lower ourselves safely down.

Once the steepest sections were behind us, the remainder of our return was uneventful. When we arrived at the snow-free sunny parking area, the contrast was remarkable. Winter was a mere 1,800 feet above.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates nine more exciting mountain ascents around the state including a winter climb of Mount Katahdin.

Ron Chase resides in Topsham. His latest book, "Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine" is available at www.northcountrypress.com/maine-al-fresco or in bookstores and through online retailers. His previous books are "The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery" and "Mountains for Mortals – New England." Visit his website at www.ronchaseoutdoors.com or he can be reached at ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net

Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.

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Registration now open for the 2025 WinterKids Downhill 24

CARRABASSETT VALLEY, ME — The countdown is on! Registration is officially open for the 2025 WinterKids Downhill 24, Maine's only 24-hour ski and snowboard challenge. Mark your calendars for February 27-28, 2025, as Sugarloaf transforms into a high-energy, illuminated playground for skiers and snowboarders from across New England.

This year, WinterKids is excited to spotlight a growing movement in our community: philanthropy powered by kids, for kids. From the youngest skiers to seasoned snowboarders, more young people are stepping up, fundraising, and advocating for their peers. The Downhill 24 embodies this spirit of "kids helping kids," ensuring all children can access outdoor winter fun and activities that keep them healthy and thriving.



Here's what you need to know:

What's New in 2025: Special prizes and challenges just for younger participants to inspire and reward their fundraising efforts, expanded course options, and eco-friendly event tees.

Returning: The iconic, lit-up Narrow Gauge trail (thanks to Herc Rentals and Pike Industries!), non-stop skiing and snowboarding, and the chance to ski Sugarloaf at night—the only time you can all year.

Why You Should

Join: Whether you're a seasoned athlete, a weekend warrior, or just looking for a fun way to give back, this event is for you. WinterKids is calling on families, friends, coworkers, and thrill-seekers to lace up their boots, hit the slopes, and make a difference. Proceeds from the event support WinterKids' programs, helping over 50,000 participants each year stay active and healthy outdoors during the winter.

This year's Downhill 24 is a unique opportunity to celebrate kids taking the lead in giving back to their



communities. It's more than just an event; it's a chance to empower the next generation of change-makers to make a meaningful impact.

How to Register
Visit D24.org to sign up. Spots are limited and filling fast, so don't wait!



AARP News You Can Use – January 2025

Happy New Year! As we start on the path of this new year, so too will Maine's 132nd Legislature begin its new session. AARP Maine's Tuesday at the State House (TASH) volunteers will be there advocating for policies and legislation that support Mainers 50-plus. As you may know, AARP's advocacy work is strictly non-partisan. We support policies, not politicians, which allows AARP volunteers to create relationships with legislators on both sides of the political aisle.

This year, AARP Maine has identified a few key areas of interest to Maine citizens. The focus will be on policies related to family caregiving, financial resilience, livable communities, and consumer and individual rights and protections.

More specifically, AARP will focus on working with legislators to address the high cost of utilities and to support family caregivers. According to research conducted by AARP, 67% of Mainers have seen their electricity bill go up in the last twelve



months. Continuing rate hikes are a concern for all Mainers especially retirees with a fixed income, and families trying to live within their budget. Care-

giving is another important concern for Maine families. Many of us have been or are currently helping to care for family members. TASH volunteers and AARP staff will be working with our legislators to find solutions to support Maine's 166,000 family caregivers.

Affordable housing and livable communities continue to be important legislative issues around the country and in Maine. TASH volunteers will continue to follow these topics and attend legislative hearings as Maine's legislature

begins its work in earnest.

One of the benefits of participating in the TASH meetings is the opportunity to see how our state legislature works. Maine is unique in that every bill proposed gets a hearing. All citizens are able to send written statements or deliver testimony about proposed bills to the appropriate committees or their legislators. We have found that Maine legislators are very interested in hearing from constituents, and in finding ways to address major issues of concern to AARP and all Maine citi-

zens. Each and every voice has a chance to be heard and to make a difference in Maine.

To learn more about AARP's advocacy work, please check out aarp.org/me. AARP's local Coffee Talks will be starting back up in January after the first of the year. We hope to see you there!

Please use the following QR Code or web address to find more information about AARP Maine and events near you.

Joyce Bucciantini
AARP Maine Community Outreach Volunteer

Maine Right to Life names new executive director

AUBURN, ME – The Maine Right to Life Committee appoints the Hon. Michael McClellan as its new executive director.

Mike is a husband, father, grandfather, and community member with a passion for life! Notably, he has an award-winning background

as an Executive Director for both the Maine Statewide Independent Living Council and the Greater Bridgton Lakes Region Chamber

of Commerce. As a former state representative and as a policy director at the Christian Civic League, Mike also brings with him a wealth of

legislative knowledge.

The Maine Right to Life Committee will formally welcome Mr. McClellan at their 50th Anniversary

commemoration, which is scheduled at St. Maximilian-Kolbe Church in Scarborough, Maine on Monday, December 30th at 9am.

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Arts & Entertainment

Sabattus Rec Club holds annual Jingle Jog

MAINE -- The Sabattus Rec Club running group held its annual Jingle Jog on Saturday, Dec. 21. The group traveled various routes in the village area spreading cheer, before returning for treats and mulled cider. This year's turnout was the largest in the several years the group has been doing the Jingle Jog.

Also, the running group again held its annual toy drive for Loaves and Fishes this year, and had the most successful collection yet. Many thanks to community and running

group members who donated to the drive.

The Rec Club Running group meets every Wednesday at 6 p.m. in front of Mixers nightclub on Sabattus Rd. Participants include runners, joggers, and walkers of all ages and abilities who match up and go out for 30-45 minutes of exercise. There is no charge and people are free to attend when they can and want to.

FMI, check out the Sabattus Rec Club Running Program page on Facebook, or email running@sabattusrec.com



Bangor author finds inspiration in Midcoast for first novel

BANGOR, ME. — Jeffrey Hope never envisioned himself writing a children's book. Yet, to his surprise, his debut novel has been categorized as middle-grade fiction, aimed at readers aged 8 to 12.

"I spent a couple of years on draft after draft of what I thought of as a fun story about two brothers. My goal to write a story with silly humor. There's no violence, no swearing, no relationship trouble. I was shocked to learn I was actually following the rules of chapter books for middle-grade readers," Hope said.

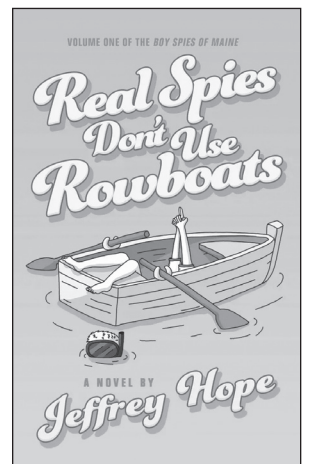
A former journalist who worked at WABI in Bangor and KTUU in Anchorage, Alaska, Hope currently leads the sports journalism program for the New England School of Journalism at Husson University. His courses include the principles of journalism, yet his interest in fiction has also seen him immersed in books and webinars about storytelling.

"I've had such a great time learning about fiction writing. This project has created so many incredible unintended consequences. I routinely find myself in the middle

of a lecture adding something I have learned from the world of fiction that relates to the media world we all consume daily," Hope said.

Hope's book, *Real Spies Don't Use Rowboats*, tells the story of brothers John and Sam, who aspire to become professional spies like their hero, James Bond. Set in the 1970s, the novel, written from John's perspective, quickly diverges into the absurd, reflecting his wandering mind.

"These days, there are many stories about kids working secretly for the government, or tak-



adventure across John's Bay, Penobscot Bay, and Downeast Maine, much like the characters in his book.

While his initial passion for drumming led him toward music, Hope's enduring love for storytelling ultimately prevailed. He graduated with a journalism degree from Emerson College and enjoyed a successful career as a multimedia journalist in Maine and Alaska before joining academia. Hope continues to find joy in teaching, especially with a new twist, connecting lessons from fiction writing to the broader media landscape.

Real Spies Don't Use Rowboats is now available where books are sold.

For more information about *Real Spies Don't Use Rowboats* and Jeffrey Hope, visit jeffreyhope.com.

Maine CASA to hold training March 10-14

MAINE -- Interested in advocating for the best interests of a child? The Maine Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program is holding its next training for volunteer advocates from March 10th through March 14th, 2025.

This free, five-day training is designed to prepare attendees for certification as volunteer guardians ad litem (GALs) in Maine child protection cases. Trainees may participate virtually or in person. For those who wish to partici-

pate in person, the training will be held in Augusta. Accommodations may be available.

The foundation of a CASA's work is learning about the case and then advising the court what the CASA believes is in the child's best interest. CASAs come from a wide variety of professional and personal backgrounds and are guided throughout the process by CASA program staff. CASAs bring their own unique perspectives to their work as volunteers.

If you are willing to advocate for a child's best interests, we encourage you to apply to become a CASA volunteer. Those interested in the training must complete an application and, if invited to participate, must also complete criminal and child protection services background checks.

For more information about becoming a volunteer, please contact Maine CASA at 213-2865 or by e-mail at casa@courts.maine.gov

ing on villains, vampires, and zombies. I applaud those stories, but I wanted to create a more realistic world with real humor, relationships, and adventures set right here in Maine," Hope said.

The fictional setting of Cricket Cove, a village on Maine's midcoast, provides the backdrop for John and Sam's adventures. The boys' ambitions are continually thwarted by practical obstacles, such as their parents' refusal to let them use the family's motorboat alone. Their exploits also include dodging the relentless taunting from their neighbors, the John-

son boys.

"I think I had the most fun when I thought about imagination and how kids daydream. The more I thought about it, the more I remembered from my own past, when I distinctly remember so many adult conversations we kids did everything we could think of to escape," Hope said.

Born in Bangor and raised in the midcoast region, Hope's childhood was steeped in the maritime culture of Maine. Living across from his grandparents' working farm and with access to sailboats, Hope's formative years were filled with

Maine Youth Action, Youth for Climate Justice to merge

MAINE -- After months of thoughtful reflection and dialogue, effective December 31, 2024, Maine Youth Action (MYA) will merge with Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ). All legislative advocacy efforts MYA facilitated will continue under MYCJ. MYA will also maintain its

plaintiff status in the lawsuit against the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. Additional positions will be created at MYCJ, including a Clean Transportation Advocate and another to conduct outreach efforts for DivestMaine.

We are incredibly proud of the impact Maine

Youth Action has generated over the course of its 3+ years of advocacy. Whether that be advancing goals to reduce transportation emissions, championing constitutionally-protected environmental rights, or fighting for public power, we have strived to demonstrate the power of youth in politics. Young

Mainers are the backbone of our campaigns, legislative efforts and statewide conversations, so we are forever grateful to serve as a voice for such a crucial constituency. We hope MYA members will join us as we continue our advocacy under MYCJ.

The youth climate movement extends be-

yond Maine Youth Action. It is about the thousands of young Mainers who band together to shift the Overton window in our politics to make bold and lasting change. It will always, therefore, be the first and foremost priority to constantly improve the health and strength of our movement. As such, we

find it within the best interest of all to merge our organizations, consolidate resources, and champion key issues -- together. This move will reinvigorate and fundamentally shape the landscape, all for the better.

Onwards,
Cole Cochrane and
Elise Hartill

Sen. King named “Legislator of The Year”



(L-R) – Chief Executive Officer, President and Founder of East Coast Wings + Grill Sam Ballas; President & CEO of the International Franchise Association (IFA) Matt Haller; Maine Great Clips franchisee Timothy Renyi; Sen. Angus King; Aroma Joe’s President & COO Dave Tucci; Immediate Past Chair of IFA Board of Directors and CEO of Propelled Brands Catherine Monson; and Immediate Past Chair of IFA and Vice Chair of Ignite Fitness Holdings David Humphrey

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senator Angus King (I-ME) has been named a “Legislator of the Year” from the International Franchise Association (IFA), the world’s oldest and largest organization representing franchising worldwide. The bipartisan honor is given to lawmakers on both sides of the aisle willing to cross party

lines to support a pro-franchising, pro-business agenda.

“When the stakes were the highest, Senator King stood firmly with the franchise community and against expanded joint employer,” said Michael Layman, IFA senior vice president of government relations and public affairs. “Senator King cares deep-



(L-R) – Timothy Renyi, Dave Tucci, Sen. Angus King

ly about the small business community, and he and his office have been steadfast champions throughout his time in office. The citizens of Maine and small businesses everywhere benefit from his thoughtful and principled leadership.”

The award was presented by Dave Tucci, president and COO of Aroma Joe’s, a Maine-based coffee franchise. Founded in 2000 and headquartered in Scarborough, Maine, Aroma Joe’s has 117 locations across Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Florida, Rhode Island, Connecticut,

and New York. Aroma Joe’s is a local destination for handcrafted coffee and espresso drinks, unique infused blends, signature AJs RUSH® Energy Drinks and all-day food offerings served in a friendly and upbeat environment.

“As a Maine-based company, we are grateful to legislators like Senator Angus King who put small and franchise businesses first, to ensure they have the opportunity to grow. After surpassing the 100-location milestone last year, with several more shops slated to open over the next few years, we rec-



(L-R) – Gary Robins, David Humphrey, Catherine Monson, Steve Hockett (IFA Chair and CEO of Great Clips, Inc.), Matt Haller, Timothy Renyi, Dave Tucci, Sen. Angus King

ognize that growth is able to continue in large part because of legislative support of the franchise industry at both the local and national level,” said Tucci.

With more than 800,000 establishments, including more than 2,000 in Maine, franchising supports nearly 9 million jobs across the country. In April 2024, Senator King voted for the bipartisan H.J. Res. 98, a Congressional Review Act (CRA) resolution overturning the National Labor Relations Board’s (NLRB) expanded joint

employer rule. The CRA was a response to the October 2023 joint employer standard issued by the NLRB that would deem franchisors and franchisees jointly liable for the same employees – undercutting the foundation of the entire model.

The attempted NLRB expansion went even further than a previous joint employer rule that destroyed 376,000 jobs, cost small businesses \$33.3 billion, and led to a 93% spike in lawsuits in the franchise sector alone.

BBB advocates for awareness of holiday scams

MAINE -- Some consumers have been getting text messages stating that a major delivery carrier needs them to “update delivery preferences” on a package by clicking a link. The problem? The text is a scam and the link results in the theft of personal information.

Most consumers love the convenience of making purchases online and having them shipped straight to their doorstep. But with millions of packages delivered each year, con artists and thieves have developed many ways to steal from shoppers. Fortunately, there are also many ways to protect yourself from their shady tactics.

Popular delivery scams

Delivery scams and theft are particularly prevalent during the holidays when more packages are shipped, but they can happen year-round. Scammers are hoping shoppers are busy or distracted and will act without thinking.

The first scams to look out for are phishing

texts or emails that pose as official notices from delivery companies. These either contain a “tracking link,” a message that the shipper is having difficulty delivering a package to you, or, most recently, a link to update delivery preferences. Clicking the link either takes you to a form that asks for personally identifying information or to a site that downloads malware onto your computer.

Another delivery scam involves fake “missed delivery” tags. Scammers place a note on your door that claims they are having challenges delivering a package to you. They ask you to call a phone number to reschedule your delivery, but it’s a ruse to get your personal information.

Another issue shoppers face is package theft. Many consumers have had their packages stolen before they arrive home from work. Thieves snatch packages from doorsteps or lobbies of apartment or condo complexes. Criminals even

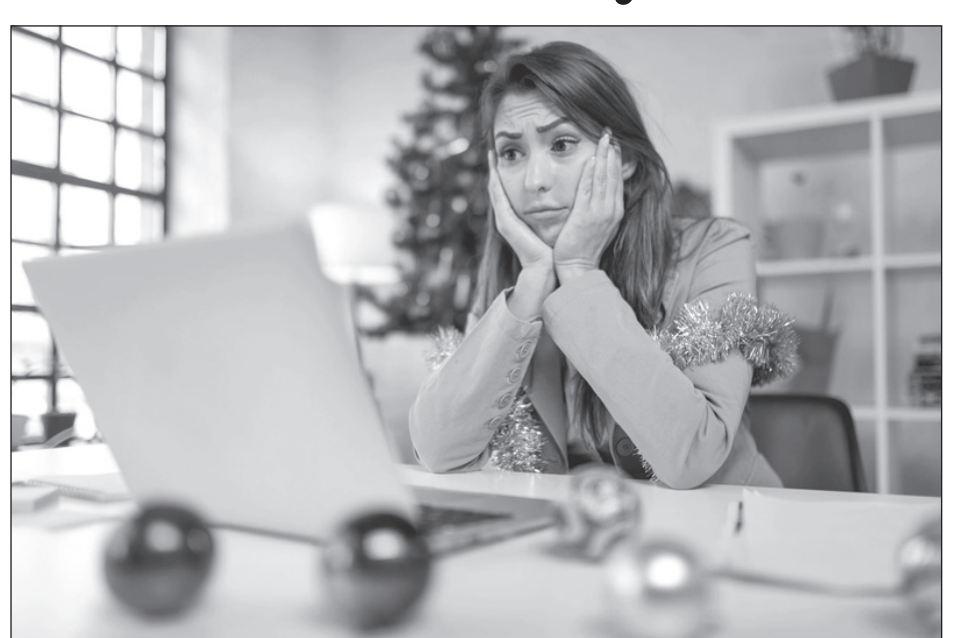
follow delivery and postal trucks. When the truck leaves, the crooks move in and grab the parcels.

How to avoid delivery scams:

1. Take precautions to ensure a safe delivery: If you have a valuable or fragile item delivered to your home, purchase shipping insurance. In addition, always get tracking numbers for your purchases and check the shipping progress periodically.

2. Watch out for texts, calls, or emails about a missed delivery. Legitimate delivery services usually leave a “missed delivery” notice on your door. If you receive a missed delivery notice, examine the form carefully to make sure it is authentic, and only then follow their instructions. Keep track of what you’ve ordered to better understand what is coming and when. Don’t click on links; go to the delivery carrier’s website directly or log in and use the retailer’s tracking tools.

3. Request a signature: Chances are this fea-



ture may come with a price tag, but it may be worth the extra fee. Requesting a signature means that a delivery service won’t be able to drop a package on your doorstep unless someone is around to sign for it.

4. Don’t leave packages sitting on your doorstep. Packages left sitting outside are particularly vulnerable to theft. To ensure safe delivery, have your package delivered to

your workplace or a trusted friend or neighbor who will be home to accept delivery. Some delivery companies now have lockers where your packages can securely wait for you to pick them up using a one-time code to open the locker.

5. Open your delivery upon receipt to check for damage or signs of tampering. Contact the seller immediately if you believe

something is wrong with the shipment or it’s not what you ordered. Also, review the seller’s return policy for damaged or unwanted items.

For more information Visit [BBB.org/Avoid-Scams](https://www.bbb.org/Avoid-Scams) to learn more, and if you’ve been the victim of a delivery scam, please report it at [BBB.org/Scam-Tracker](https://www.bbb.org/Scam-Tracker). Your report can help others avoid falling victim to similar scams.

\$9.3M to Maine to improve roadway safety, protect wildlife



WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) today announced a \$9.3 million grant award to the Maine Department of Transportation (MaineDOT) to construct a wildlife crossing in the city of Caribou that will reduce collisions between vehicles and wildlife. Maine is one of 16 grant recipients selected to receive funding in the second round of \$125 million grants for 16 wildlife crossing projects nationwide, including one Native American Tribe.

The funding is available through the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program, a new grant program in its second round of awards that was created by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

The purpose of the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program is to improve safety for motorists and wildlife by reducing vehicle collisions with wildlife while also improving habitat connectivity and supporting the survival of threatened or endangered

species. The funding supports studies and projects that construct wildlife crossings over and below busy roads, add fencing to direct animals to the crossings, and monitor performance of crossing systems. Overall, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law makes a total of \$350 million available over five years through FY 2026 under the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program.

Each year, more than one million wildlife vehicle collisions are estimated to impact motorists and wildlife in the U.S. Wildlife-vehicle collisions involving large animals result in approximately 200 human fatalities and 26,000 injuries to drivers and their passengers each year. These collisions also cost the public more than \$10 billion annually. This includes economic costs, such as loss of income, medical costs, property damage, and more. Highways can threaten wildlife populations by fragmenting habitats, creating barriers to safe movement, and causing wildlife vehicle

collisions.

"Too many Americans are injured or killed each year in crashes involving cars and wildlife, especially in rural areas - which is why our Department created the first-ever program dedicated to crossings that make roads and highways safer for both humans and wildlife," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "With funding made possible by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the projects moving forward in 16 states will reduce collisions between drivers and wildlife, create places for wildlife to safely move over and under highways, and help preserve American life and property."

"Safety is FHWA's top priority, and these roadway safety investments will ensure that motorists and wildlife get to their destinations safely while advancing a safe, efficient transportation system that benefits all road users as well as the environment," said Acting Federal Highway Deputy Administrator Gloria M. Shepherd.

The \$9.3 million grant awarded to MaineDOT will use a pre-cast concrete arch culvert to provide passage for moose, deer, and other large wildlife. The Caribou Wildlife and Aquatic Habitat Crossing Project offers multiple benefits to improve safety by reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions in the area, removing two existing barriers for wildlife and fish passage, and improving habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species.

In its first round of grant awards last year, the Federal Highway Administration awarded \$110 million in grants for 19 wildlife crossing projects in 17 states. The agency released a second Notice of Funding Opportunity for the



Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program in June 2024 and received 61 applications requesting more than \$585 million from 28 states including 26 state Departments of Transportation, 15 local public agencies, two Federal Land Management agencies and one Native American Tribe. The number of applications and the requested funding amounts continue to indicate strong interest in the Wildlife Crossings grant

program across the nation.

The Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program supports the Department of Transportation's National Roadway Safety Strategy (NRSS), which sets a goal of achieving zero roadway deaths and serious injuries through a Safe System Approach to prevent crashes from happening in the first place. Projects funded by this program reduce wildlife crashes, which will help lower the associated economic impact (such as loss of income, medical costs, property damage, and decline in productivity and quality of life) while simultaneously improving habitat connectivity to sustain the environment and improve the overall safety of the traveling public.

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Legislation to improve veterans' access to healthcare, benefits

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Angus King (I-Maine) and Kevin Cramer (R-N.D.), members of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, are applauding the Congressional passage of bipartisan, bicameral legislation to improve veterans' access to healthcare and benefits. The Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act includes the King, Cramer bipartisan legislation reauthorizing the Veteran Employment Through Technology Education Courses (VET-TEC) program that helps veterans access high-technology jobs. The VET-TEC program provides tuition at eligible training institutions, housing stipends, and connections with potential employers. Since its start in 2017, VET-TEC has helped thousands of veterans get jobs in the technology sector with an average starting salary of over \$65,000 – but current authorization for the program expired earlier this year. “The VET-TEC program has been an exceptional resource for thou-

sands of veterans looking for good-paying jobs in the tech sector,” said Senator King. “The reauthorization of the VET-TEC Authorization Act expands eligibility for both veterans and training institutions and is a commonsense step to give even more veterans access to opportunities in tech. While there is always areas where we disagree, I am glad both chambers and both parties came together to support our men and women who answered the call.”

“The VET-TEC program has created effective pathways for veterans to

launch their careers in tech,” said Senator Cramer. “Building on its successes, this reauthorization expands eligibility to allow more veterans to participate in the program. Supporting our veterans includes enhancing the employment resources and opportunities available to them. I appreciate Congress' support of this bill and I look forward to the President signing it into law.”

Created in 2017's Forever G.I. Bill, the VET-TEC pilot program has 31 approved education providers that have

trained over 8,000 veterans, and helped thousands start high-tech jobs with an average starting salary of \$65,061. The program is currently partnered with 14 employers including the VA's own Office of Information and Technology, which seeks VET-TEC graduates for filling internal vacancies.

Representing one of the states with the highest rates of veterans per capita, Senator King is



a staunch advocate for America's servicemembers and veterans. As a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, he has worked to ensure that veterans have access jobs and training after separating from military service. He recently cosponsored bipartisan legislation to provide veterans with job opportunities in the trucking industry.

and the GPO, including more than 21,000 people in Maine. Senator King has long championed reforms to social security to keep the federal government's promise to all working Americans. Most recently, he was part of a working group with Republican Senator Bill Cassidy to preserve and protect social security for generations to come as the program is set to go insolvent by 2033 without congressional action – resulting in across-the-board cuts to benefits for all recipients.

Social Security benefits restored for public service employees

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Angus King is applauding the long-sought Senate passage of a bipartisan, bicameral bill that will repair social security benefits for more than 2 million Americans who have devoted their careers to public service. The Social Security Fairness Act will eliminate the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO), added to the Social Security Act in 1983, which unfairly reduce or

eliminate earned Social Security benefits for more than 2.5 million Americans including police officers, firefighters, teachers, and federal, state, and local government employees.

The bill, cosponsored by Senator King, passed the Senate in a 76-20 vote and previously passed the House last month in a 327-75 vote.

Currently, the WEP cuts into the earned Social Security benefits of an individual who also receives a public pension. For ex-

ample, public school educators who do not earn Social Security, but who work part-time, or during the summer, in jobs covered by Social Security have reduced benefits, effectively penalizing them for their public sector work. Likewise, the GPO affects the spousal benefits of people who work as federal, state, or local government employees — including police officers, firefighters, and teachers — if the job is not covered by Social Security. The GPO reduces by two-

thirds the benefit received by surviving spouses who also collect a government pension — often offsetting benefits entirely.

“Across Maine, firefighters, police officers, teachers and other public servants put the well-being of our communities first; it's past time they receive the benefits they so rightly have earned,” said Senator King. “Today was an important step towards correcting this injustice— demonstrating how lawmakers can put people over politics to achieve real results. Thanks to my

colleagues on both sides of the aisle for supporting our public servants and voting for the Social Security Fairness Act. I look forward to keeping the momentum going so we can finally save social security for all Americans.”

According to a new report from the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service, the WEP currently impacts more than 2.1 million Social Security beneficiaries, and the GPO impacts nearly 750,000 retirees. More than 300,000 American retirees are impacted by both the WEP

and the GPO, including more than 21,000 people in Maine.

Senator King has long championed reforms to social security to keep the federal government's promise to all working Americans. Most recently, he was part of a working group with Republican Senator Bill Cassidy to preserve and protect social security for generations to come as the program is set to go insolvent by 2033 without congressional action – resulting in across-the-board cuts to benefits for all recipients.

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Auburn Concert Band invites new members

AUBURN, ME – The Auburn Community Concert Band has announced that rehearsals will resume on Wednesday, January 8th, in preparation for the group’s 2025 summer concert season. This is an ideal opportunity for former high school and college band members to again experience the enjoyment of making music and performing in front of large audiences.

Interested musicians have until January 22nd to join the band during this semi-annual “Open Membership” period. The band has a particular need for

flute, clarinet and trumpet players.

Membership is open to all wind instrument players and percussionists who can read music, but requires a commitment to the group’s weekly schedule of Wednesday evening rehearsals and concerts. Band members must have their own instruments and music stands.

Weekly rehearsals take place every Wednesday evening, from 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. at the High Street Congregational Church, located between High and Pleasant Streets, in Auburn. Starting in late



June, the band will resume its annual weekly Wednesday evening concerts at Festival Plaza in downtown Auburn, weather permitting. A different program of music will be performed each week through mid-August, with

songs appealing to audiences both young and old. According to Band Director Milt Simon, it is not unusual for prospective members to feel a bit reluctant about joining the group. “We understand that, for some, it may have

been 20 or more years since they last touched their instrument.” Simon stated. “Most people regain their musical skills relatively quickly. It’s like riding a bicycle. Once you have learned to play, you never forget. You just may have to do some extra practicing.” Simon added that the opportunity to perform in front of large audiences, numbering 200 to 300 people on a weekly basis, is typically quite appealing to amateur and experienced musicians alike.

This summer will mark the organization’s 44th anniversary season

since being formed by Simon back in 1981.

Currently, the ACCB has 49 members, ranging in age from late-teens to early eighties. These members collectively represent some 15 central, southern and western Maine towns.

Additional information about the group is posted on the band’s web site: www.auburncommunityband.com.

Interested musicians are asked to notify Director Simon at auburncommunityband@gmail.com prior to attending their first rehearsal.

Gorham kids: Don’t miss Winter Wonderland Kids Night Out

SCARBOROUGH, ME -- Get ready for a frosty fun-filled night as MePowered Pastries and The Salt Flat Dance Collaborative team up for a Winter Wonderland Kids Night Out!

Kids will start the evening by baking and decorating winter-themed

treats at MePowered Pastries! Afterward, they’ll head over to The Salt Flat Dance Collaborative to learn some cool winter dance moves and play fun games to stay active and entertained.

Parents, enjoy 2.5 hours of free time on a Saturday night while your

kids have a blast in a safe and creative environment. It’s the perfect win/win for everyone!

Date: Saturday, January, 18th

Time: 5:30-8:00 PM

Ages: This class is for ages 4 and up.

Location: 174 US-1, Scarborough Maine

Cost: \$60

Class price includes all ingredients and materials for one kid. We do our best to accommodate kid food allergies and sensitivities. Leave a note at checkout and we will work with you to make sure your kid is able to bake something that works for them.

Please indicate in the notes at checkout:

1. Chef’s name and age
2. Any food allergies

Send all items for What’s Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.

Discover the Jubilee Year: An evening of reflection & renewal

SCARBOROUGH, ME – On Monday, January 13, 2025, at 7:00 PM, St. John Paul II Parish will host an enlightening evening titled Practical Catholicism: The Jubilee Year at St. Maximilian Kolbe Church in Scarborough, Maine. Join Fr. Jack Dickinson and Faith Formation Director Michelle Valcourt as they delve into the profound meaning of a Jubilee Year and share practical ways to celebrate this sacred time.

The Jubilee Year, observed every 25 years, is a special period in the Church dedicated to renewal, grace, and mercy. The upcoming Jubilee Year, themed “Pilgrims of Hope,” began on December 24, 2024, and concludes on January 6, 2026. This presentation will offer attendees a chance to uncover the rich history of the Jubilee tradition and learn meaningful ways to engage in this extraordinary year of spiritual growth.

Ryan Bilodeau, Communications Associate for St. John Paul II Parish, shared, “The Jubilee Year is an invitation to rediscover hope, deepen our faith, and experience God’s mercy in a powerful way. This event will inspire practical steps for Catholics to live out this sacred year with intention.”

About Practical Catholicism



ST. JOHN PAUL II PARISH
 ST. BARTHOLOMEW CHURCH Cape Elizabeth | HOLY CROSS CHURCH & SCHOOL South Portland | ST. MAXIMILIAN KOLBE CHURCH Scarborough

Practical Catholicism is an ongoing initiative featuring regular talks by Fr. Jack Dickinson and Michelle Valcourt. This series explores contemporary issues of faith, offering insights and practical guidance for living out Catholicism in everyday life.

Event Details:
 Date: Monday, January 13, 2025

Time: 7:00 PM

Location: St. Maximilian Kolbe Church, 150 Black Point Rd, Scarborough, ME 04074

This event is free and open to the public. All are encouraged to attend and bring a friend!

In July of 2020, St. Bartholomew Parish in Cape Elizabeth, St. Maximilian Kolbe Parish in Scarborough, and St. John and Holy Cross Parish in South Portland joined to form the new St. John Paul II Parish. The three churches maintained their individual names under the common patronage and intercession of St. John Paul II. For more information, visit www.jp2me.org.

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Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

Wednesdays

GORHAM -- Story Hour every Wednesday from 10:30 to 11:30 at North Gorham Public Library.

Thursdays

LEWISTON -- Baby Sensory Playtime in the Lewiston Public Library's Children's Department every Thursday morning from 10am to 12pm.

Drop-in and join us for Baby Sensory Playtime! Babies and their caregivers will have the opportunity to interact with a variety of sensory toys and socialize with other families with young children. Playtime with sensory toys contributes to a baby's cognitive development, fine motor skills, social and emotional development, creativity, and language development.

Recommended for babies ages birth-18 months and their caregivers. Siblings are always welcome. This program is free, open to the public and no registration is required.

Jan 3-5

MONMOUTH -- The Monmouth Community Players (MCP) are excited to present our 4th Annual MCP Shorts Play Festival, happening at the start of the new year at Cumston Hall, 796 Main St, Monmouth, ME 04259. January 3rd at 7pm, January 4th at 7pm, and January 5 at 2pm. Tickets will be \$10 general admission and are

available online or at the door. Advance tickets can be purchased by visiting our website's home page, www.monmouthcommunityplayers.org or contacting our box office at mcpboxoffice@gmail.com or calling at 207-370-9566.

Jan 10

LEWISTON -- On Friday, January 10th at 10am the Lewiston Public Library Children's Department will be offering the program My Little Snowflake Handprint Keepsake. Caregivers and their young children will be able to make a wintery snowflake themed handprint keepsake. This activity is recommended for caregivers with children between the ages of 0-6 years old. Siblings are also welcome to attend and participate. This program will take place in the Children's Department on the third floor of the library. The activity is free and there is no registration required.

Jan 11

BRUNSWICK -- The 2024-25 UUCB Concerts for a Cause Series season will include folk, jazz, blues, celtic, and choral singing for justice. This season's charities receiving

100% of the profits from the concert are Brunswick Area Teen Center and Maine Family Planning. For further details about the concerts, go to <https://www.uubrunswick.org/events/>.

David Mallett - Sat, January 11, 2025 at 7:30 pm. Doors open 7:00 pm.

Maine's own singer-songwriter David Mallett is one of America's true troubadours. In a career that spans four decades, David Mallett has recorded 17 albums and has performed in clubs, concert halls and festivals across the US, Canada and Europe. He has appeared on numerous broadcasts, including National Public Radio's A Prairie Home Companion. Known for his carefully written, poetic offerings, his body of work has provided material for more than 150 artists, including Alison Krauss, Pete Seeger, Hal Ketchum, Emmylou Harris, John Denver and even the Muppets, and his "Garden Song" has become an American folk classic.

Tickets: \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, \$10 Students/Children. Available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or online at <https://ticketstripe.com>.

com/pousette.

Jan 14

LEWISTON -- In partnership with the Lewiston CareerCenter, the Lewiston Public Library will host a resume workshop on Tuesday, January 14th in the Idea Lab on the second floor from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The CareerCenter will provide professional resume writing and job connection assistance on a first-come, first-served basis. No registration is required.

Jan 16

AUBURN -- FILM SCREENING & DISCUSSION -- BEYOND ELECTIONS: REDEFINING DEMOCRACY IN THE AMERICAS. Thursday, January 16, 2025 -- 3:00-5:00 p.m., Androscoggin Community Room, Auburn Public Library.

Jan 18

LEWISTON -- The Midcoast Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Rohan Smith presents "Invigorating Water Music." The performance is on January 18 at 7:00 p.m. at the Franco Center, 46 Cedar St., Lewiston. For info and tickets visit <https://www.midcoastsymphony.org/tickets> or call 207-481-0790. Tickets \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door. Age 25 and under are free. The Audience is also invited to our free "More with Midcoast" "Meet the Instruments" event that begins at 6:00pm.

Jan 27

AUBURN -- FILM SCREENING & DISCUSSION -- ELECTIONS, POPULISM, AND DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING IN THE AMERICAS with Dr. Clarisa Pérez-Armendáriz, Associate Professor of Politics and Chair of the Latin American and Latinx Studies Program, Bates College, Monday, January 27, 2025 -- 4:30-5:30 p.m., Androscoggin Community Room, Auburn Public Library

Feb 13

AUBURN -- BOOK DISCUSSION -- DEMOCRACY AWAKENING: NOTES ON THE STATE OF AMERICA by Heather Cox Richardson. Thursday, February 13, 2025 -- 4:00-5:00 p.m., Auburn Public Library

Mar 15

BRUNSWICK -- The 2024-25 UUCB Concerts for a Cause Series season will include folk, jazz, blues, celtic, and choral singing for justice. This season's charities receiving 100% of the profits from the concert are Brunswick Area Teen Center and Maine Family Planning. For further details about the concerts, go to <https://www.uubrunswick.org/events/>.
Women in Harmony - Sat, Mar 15, 2025 at 7:30 pm. Doors open 7:00 pm. Tickets: \$25 in advance,

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Women in Harmony is a Portland-based chorus of 60 women's voices, which has been singing for social justice for over 20 years. It is a diverse group of gay and straight, musically sophisticated and musically untrained women who unite in song and a spirit of fairness. Women in Harmony is dedicated both to musical excellence and social justice.

Tickets: \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door, \$10 Students/Children. Available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or online at <https://ticketstripe.com/womenharmony>

Apr 12

BRUNSWICK -- The 2024-25 UUCB Concerts for a Cause Series season will include folk, jazz, blues, celtic, and choral singing for justice. This season's charities receiving 100% of the profits from the concert are Brunswick Area Teen Center and Maine Family Planning. For further details about the concerts, go to <https://www.uubrunswick.org/events/>.

Guy Davis - Sat, April 12, 2025 at 7:30 pm. Doors open 7:00 pm.

Guy Davis is a two-time, back-to-back Grammy nominee for Best Traditional Blues, a musician, actor, author, and songwriter. Guy uses a blend of Roots, Blues, Folk, Rock, Rap, Spoken Word, and World Music to comment on, and address, the frustrations of social injustice, touching on historical events, and common life struggles.

Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, and \$10 for students/children. Available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or at ticketstripe.com/guy-davis.

May 17

BRUNSWICK -- The 2024-25 UUCB Concerts for a Cause Series season will include folk, jazz, blues, celtic, and choral singing for justice. This season's charities receiving 100% of the profits from the concert are Brunswick Area Teen Center and Maine Family Planning. For further details about the concerts, go to <https://www.uubrunswick.org/events/>.

House of Hamill - Sat, May 17, 2025 at 7:30 pm. Doors open 7:00 pm. Tickets: \$25 in advance,

The upcycled Celtic folk trio, House of Hamill, features Brian Buchanan and Rose Baldino of the Celtic folk-rock band Enter the Haggis. They are both accomplished traditional fiddle players and classical violinists, with over 25 years of writing and performance experience between them. They write unusual new fiddle tunes and exciting, unpredictable original songs while breathing new life into traditional and contemporary songs. A third full-time member, Caroline Browning, recently joined the duo, playing bass, mandolin, and vocals. Their music occupies a space between traditional Irish and sophisticated indie folk.

Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, and \$10 for students/children. Available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or online at ticketstripe.com/house.

June 14

BRUNSWICK -- The 2024-25 UUCB Concerts for a Cause Series season will include folk, jazz, blues, celtic, and choral singing for justice. This season's charities receiving 100% of the profits from the concert are Brunswick Area Teen Center and Maine Family Planning. For further details about the concerts, go to <https://www.uubrunswick.org/events/>.

Susan Werner - Sat, June 14, 2025 at 7:30 pm. Doors open 7:00 pm.

Susan Werner is a singer/songwriter, guitarist, and pianist who has built a reputation as one of the country's most compelling live performers. She has been playing to sold-out audiences across the country for 27 years. Renowned as a charismatic performer, she's known above all for challenging herself to conquer new styles every few years. She writes ambitious concept albums with subject matter and sounds to match. She has produced 18 albums of songs that effortlessly slide between folk/rock, jazz, Tin Pan Alley to gospel, country, and pop, all delivered with sassy wit and classic Midwestern charm.

Tickets: \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, \$10 Students/Children. Available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or online at <https://ticketstripe.com/swerner>



The rewards of being there for Mainers in crisis

As a mobile crisis worker, Marissa Exchange's role is all about giving back. She provides confidential support, and connects individuals in crisis to resources they need, collaborating with families, mental health providers, and other community partners to ensure that the person has a holistic network of support. Most importantly, she provides a safe, kind space for individuals in crisis to share what they're going through, and ask for help.

And yet when Marissa talks about her work, she gushes about how much she gets from it.

"It's super rewarding," said Marissa. "It feels really good to be able to make a difference, to know that people feel comfortable with me, and trust me to be a safe - or even just a neutral - place where they can say anything without fear of being judged or getting a negative response."

She also loves that she can make her own schedule, work remotely if she needs to, and manage her shifts while pursuing her master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, and training to become a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor.

Marissa is part of a growing legion of Crisis Responders who are discovering the rewards of working with Mainers experiencing a mental health crisis to assess their needs, and guide them to an appropriate level of care.

There are a wide variety of open positions statewide that offer full-time, part-time and per-diem opportunities. The work is done in the community, outside a hospital or nursing home. Training opportunities are widely available and easy to complete.

Like Marissa, others who are working in this field are finding that it gives back much more than it takes.

"It's just been this incredible journey," said Melanie Grant, a crisis residential services worker, who provides intervention and support to ensure the safety and well-being of patients in a residential treatment facility.

"A lot of it is just working with people who are going through a hard time, whether it has to do with substances, or past trauma or loss of a loved one. It's people needing people. And we've all needed people."

To learn more about full-time, part-time and per-diem opportunities in your community, go to Mainecareerswithpurpose.org. Follow @MaineCareerswithPurpose on Facebook and Instagram.



"It feels really good to be able to make a difference."



Outdoors for All to expand Maine recreational opportunities

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Alex Padilla (D-CA) announced that the Senate unanimously passed their bipartisan Outdoors for All Act, legislation that will expand outdoor recreational opportunities in low-income communities across the nation. The bill passed today as part of the Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences (EXPLORE) Act, which previously passed the U.S. House of Representatives and now heads to the President's desk to be signed into law.

"Our state is fortunate to have abundant natural resources that allow Mainers and visitors to enjoy our pristine environment," said Senator Collins. "However, many Americans, particularly those living in urban and low-income areas, lack access to outdoor green spaces that give them the ability to experience the beauty of nature close to home. The bipartisan Outdoors for All Act will invest in these communities to support parks, playgrounds, trails, and other projects to help ensure Americans have outdoor recreation opportunities."

"Everyone deserves access to the outdoors re-

gardless of where they live. Having grown up in Los Angeles, I've seen firsthand how urban and low-income communities often lack access to adequate park space," said Senator Padilla. "The Outdoors for All Act will invest in new parks and open spaces — and upgrade existing ones — to bring critical natural benefits like shade, tree cover, and cleaner air to urban neighborhoods."

"We are thrilled to see the outdoors bring people together and showcase the broad, bipartisan support for more recreation access," said Nicole Zussman, President and CEO of the Appalachian Mountain Club. "Passage of the EXPLORE Act through Congress, including the Outdoors for All Act, is a major victory for our collective work to foster equity in the outdoors and facilitate joyous, meaningful outdoor experiences. We are especially grateful to Senator Susan Collins for her leadership on the issue, including her co-sponsorship of the Outdoors for All Act. Outdoor recreation contributes \$3 billion each year to Maine's economy, and the Outdoors for All Act will help even more Mainers enjoy the physical, social, and mental ben-

efits of recreating outside."

"The passage of the EXPLORE Act is a pivotal achievement for outdoor recreation in Maine and across the country," said Jenny Kordick, Executive Director of Maine Outdoor Brands. "This legislation will ensure outdoor spaces are welcoming and accessible to all, while bolstering Maine's \$3.4 billion outdoor recreation industry, supporting jobs, and driving economic growth in communities across our state. We are especially grateful for Senator Collins' leadership in championing the Outdoors for All Act, which is included in this legislation and will expand opportunities for everyone to connect with nature, fostering healthier communities and a stronger appreciation for Maine's incredible outdoor heritage."

"The unanimous passage of the Outdoors for All Act in the Senate marks a historic milestone in expanding outdoor access for all Americans," said Dr. Carrie Besnette Hausner, President and CEO of Trust for Public Land. "As one of Congress' final acts of 2024, this bipartisan achievement underscores the vital role parks and green spaces play in uniting us. For the first time,

this legislation ensures that tribal nations can directly access funding from the Land and Water Conservation Fund, while also providing essential resources to underserved urban communities. With this measure now heading to the President's desk, we are one step closer to making the benefits and joys of the outdoors a reality for every community — regardless of location or income. The Outdoors for All Act wouldn't have been possible without the leadership of Senators Alex Padilla and Susan Collins and Representatives Nanette Barragán and Mike Turner. We applaud their bipartisan efforts to prioritize equitable park access, and we look forward to working with communities across the country to bring this transformative legislation to life."

The Outdoors for All Act codifies the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program in federal law. ORLP improves and funds new trails, green spaces, playgrounds, and cultural gathering spaces in underserved communities. As our cities grow and the effects of climate change intensify, the Outdoors for All Act would promote equitable access to the bene-

fits of local parks — from job creation, to shade and tree cover, to clean air.

Congress established the ORLP program in 2014 to support urban parks in underserved communities across the country. It is administered by the National Park Service and funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) as a nationally competitive grant program to increase access to the outdoors for disadvantaged communities. While LWCF is a popular program with strong bipartisan support and mandatory funding, ORLP still remains a discretionary grant program, which jeopardizes funding for underserved communities who lack access to outdoor recreation.

The Outdoors for All Act has been endorsed by organizations including The Wilderness Society, KABOOM!, Sierra Club, Trust for Public Land, National Recreation and Park Association, City Parks Alliance, National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers (NASORLO), National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD), LWCF Coalition, Outdoor Industry Association, REI Co-op, Latino Outdoors, Kids Speak for Parks, Safe Routes Partnership, Na-

tional League of Cities, Appalachian Trail Conservancy, American Heart Association, American Forrester, American Hiking Society, Outdoor Alliance for Kids (OAK), Vista Outdoor, PeopleForBikes, and Children and Nature Network.

The bill is cosponsored in the Senate by Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Cory Booker (D-NJ), Bob Casey (D-PA), Tammy Duckworth (D-IL), John Fetterman (D-PA), John Hickenlooper (D-CO), Tim Kaine (D-VA), Angus King (I-ME), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Patty Murray (D-WA), Jon Ossoff (D-GA), Gary Peters (D-MI), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Peter Welch (D-VT), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.



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